Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTO 8152

NODIS CHEROKEE

WHITE HOUSE FOR THE PRESIDENT AND DR. BRZEZINSKI ONLY FROM THE SECRETARY.

DEPARTMENT FOR ACTING SECRETARY AND PETER TARNOFF ONLY FROM THE SECRETARY.

1. TODAY, MY LAST DAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST, I LEFT ISRAEL EARLY ANDIMA DE QUICK STOPS IN JORDAN, SYRIA AND EGYPT TO REVIEW MY TALKS IN ISR-AEL AND TO CONFIRM THE COURSE THAT WE WILL FOLLOW BETWEEN NOW AND THE

END OF SEPTEMBER. DESPITE THE WIDELY REPORTED HARD ISRAELI LINE, EACH OF MY HOSTS SAID HE
WAS READY TO STICK WITH US IN THE PROCESS AHEAD.
2. JORDAN. ON MY FIRST STOP, I TALKED WITH KING HUSSEIN AND HIS CLOSE

ADVISERS FOR ABOUT AN HOUR. REPORTING ON MY MEETINGS IN TAIF, I SAID THE SAUDIS WERE PREPARED TO TAKE PART IN TALKS IN NEW YORK NEXT MONTH AND WOULD GIVE US THEIR VIEWS ON WHAT SHOULD BE CONTAINED IN A TREATY.

THEY WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE IDEA OF A SINGLE ARAB DELEGATIONN THOUGH IN THE PAST THEY HAD PREFERED NATIONAL DELEGATIONS. I NOTED THAT SYRIA, JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA NOW ALL AGREED TO THIS FORM OF
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DELEGATION. HUSSEIN TOLD ME OF FAHD, HAD COME TO AMMAN THE PREVIOUS HAVING BEEN TO EGYPT, AND SAID THE EGYPTIANS PROMISED TO LOOK AGAIN INTO A SINGLE DELEGATION. HE SAY THE BEGINNINGS OF A CHANGE.
ADHAM ALSO SAID THERE HAD BEEN SOME PROGRESS ON ACCEPTANCE OF RESO-LUTION 242 BY THE
PLO. THE EGYPTIANS WERE MEETING WITH THE PLO AUGUST 11.

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3. I TURNED TO MY TALKS IN ISRAEL AND TOLD THE KING THEY HAD BEEN DOMINATED BY THE STRONG NEGATIVE ISRAELI REACTION TO THE IDEA OF OUR MEETING WITH THE PLO. BEGIN HAD ARGUED AGAINST OUR DOING THIS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. I SAID I HAD RESTATED OUR POSITION, AS YOU HAD STATED IT, AND TOLD BEGIN THIS IS HOW WE WOULD PROCEED. THE ISRAELIS HAD BEEN UNHAPPY BUT HAD ACCEPTED THAT IT WAS WHERE WE STOOD.

THEY WILL OPPOSE PLO PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA, AND I COULD NOT SAY WHETHER THEIR POSITION COULD BE CHANGED. IN ANY EVENT, DAYAN WOULD BE

COMING TO NEW YORK ABOUT SEPTEMBER 15, READY TO TAKE PART IN TALKS, AND ISRAEL WOULD GIVE US A DRAFT TREATY TEXT.

4. THE KING SAID HE WAS ENCOURAGED. WE WERE NOT JUST GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES. HE HOPED WE COULD MAINTAIN PROGRESS AND COULD SEE THE PLO INVOLVED IN THE PEACE PROCESS. HE WAS CLEARER ON THIS POINT THAN HE HAD BEENIN OUR PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS. HE HOPED THE PLO WOULD ACC-EPT RESOLUTIO, 242 AND HAD THE IMPRESSION THE SAUDIS THOUGHT THEY

WOULD. HE ASKED ABOUT THE ISRAELI POSITION ON WEST BANK SETTLEMENT, AND I TOLD HIM WE HAD DISAGREED ON THIS, EACH STATING HIS VIEWS FOR-CEFULLY.

5. FINALLY, WE DISCUSSED SOUTHERN LEBANON BRIEFLY AND I DESCRIBED FOR THE KING HOW THE ISRAELIS SAW IT. HE REFERRED TO LEBANESE TALK OF SENDING LEBANESE TROOPS TO THE SOUTH. HE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG THIS WOULD TAKE, BUT NOTED THAT IF THE TROOPS WERE NOT WELL PREPARED THEY WOULD END UP FIGHTING ON ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.

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6. SYRIA. IN MY TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD AND FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM, I REVIEWED MY TALKS IN ISRAEL BOTH ON THE PEACE

NEGOTIATIONS AND ON SOUTHERN LEBANON ALONG THE SAME LINES AS I HAD IN JORDAN.

7. ON THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, ASSAD ASKED ENOUGH QUESTIONS TO SEE THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN THE ISRAELI POSITION, BUT SEEMED TO ACCEPT THAT WE MUST PURSUE THE COURSE WE OUTLINED DURING OUR LAST VISIT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE SEES NO SERIOUS ISRAELI INTEREST IN NEGOTIATIONS. HE WILL SEND KHADDAM TO THE U.S. IN SEPTEMBER AND INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD GIVE ME THEIR IDEAS ON WHAT THEY WANT TO SEE IN A PEACE TREATY. I DO NOT EXPECT

AN ELABORATE CONTRIBUTION, BUT I WAS GLAD THAT HE SEEMED PREPARED TO GIVE US SOMETHING BECAUSE THE SYRIANS ARE LEAST INCLINED TO A SYSTEMATIC EXERCISE OF THIS KIND.

8. ON SOUTHERN LEBANON, I TOLD ASSAD THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE CUMULATIVE DETERIORATION OF THE CHRISTIANS' POSITION AND BELIEVE THAT SYRIA IS ABETTING THE PALESTINIANS THERE IN CON-TINUING THEIR WAR OF ATTRITION. ASSAD DENIED ANY SYRIAN MILITARY PRESENCE WITH THE PALESTINIANS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND CLAIMED THAT THE PROBLEM WILL BE RESOLVED AS RECENT PHASED AGREEMENTS GO INTO EFFECT

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ASSAD WAS OUTRAGED AT BEGIN'S STATEMENT OF "MORAL RESPONSIBILITY" AND CHARGED IN TURN THAT IT IS THE ISRAELIS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING THE FIGHTING GOING. I URGED STRONGLY THAT EVERY EFFORT BE MADE TO STOP THE FIRING. DESPITE HIS STRONG DEN-

UNCIATION OF ISRAELI POLICY, I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPLICATIONS OF ISRAELI CONCERN -- THE POSSIBILITY OF ISRAELI MIL-

ITARY ACTION-- WELL ENOUGH TO TRY TO DAMPEN THE FIGHTING.

9. EGYPT. MY LAST ROUND OF TALKS TODAY WAS WITH PRESIDENT SADAT IN HIS REST HOUSE AT JIANIKILIS, NEAR ALEXANDRIA. AS I HAD DONE

WITH THE OTHER LEADERS, I REVIEWED THE RESULTS OF MY DISCUSSIONS IN

ISRAEL. SADAT'S REACTION WAS THAT ISRAEL HAD NOT GIVEN US MUCH TO WORK WITH.

10. ON THE PLO QUESTION, I REPEATED THAT WE WOULD TALK TO THE PLO IF THEY ACCEPTED 242, WITH AN APPROPRIATE RESERVATION, BUT THAT WE COULD NOT GUARANTEE THEIR PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA. I CAUTIONED SADAT AG-AINST ANY ATTEMPT BY PLO TO MOVE FOR FORMAL AMMENDMENT OF 242 AT THE UN. THIS WOULD BE ANATHEMA TO THE ISRAELIS, WOULD UNRAVEL THE AGREED FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS, AND WE WOULD BE REQUIRED TO USE THE VETO. (SEE SINAI 11 COMMITMENTS, PARA. 4 OF MEMO ON GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE.)

WE DID, HOWEVER, FEEL THAT PALESTINIANS SHOULD BE REPRESENTED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND FOR THIS REASON WE SAW MERIT IN A UNIFIED ARAB DE-LEGATION WHICH WOULD INCLUDE LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS, IN ADDITION TO

THE ORIGINAL PARTIES. FOR THE ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS, WE WOULD ENVISAGE THE UNIFIED DELEGATION BREAKING UP INTO BILATERAL GROUPS, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE GROUP DEALING WITH THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. UNLIKE MY PREVIOUS TALKS ON THIS ISSUE, THIS TIME SADAT DID NOT REJECT THE IDEA OF A UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATION, BUT DID ASK ABOUT ISRAEL'S ATTITUDE. I REPORTED THAT ISRAEL WAS OPPOSED TO A SINGLE ARAB DELEGATION.

11. SADAT ASKED IF I THOUGHT THE ISRAELI POSITIONS WERE ESSENTIA-

LLY TACTICAL OR STRATEGIC. I INDICATED THAT THERE WERE ELEMENTS OF BOTH, REVIEWING EACH TO DISCUSS THE TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC CONCERNS BUT THAT ON THE WEST BANK-PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN PARTICULAR, THERE SEEMED TO BE LITTLE ROOM FOR BARGAINING.

12. SADAT THEN ASKED ABOUT THE ATTITUDE THAT WE INTENDED TO ADOPT IN THE FACE OF WHAT HE TERMED ISRAELI STUBBORNESS. I TOLD HIM THAT OUR POSITION WOULD REMAIN AS WE HAD PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED IT, AND I

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REVIEWED THE FIVE PRINCIPLES THAT HAD EARLIER BEEN PRESENTED.
I ADDED THAT WE SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE PRINCIPLES RELATING TO JERUSALEM
AND REVIEWED THE CURRENT SUGGESTION OF THE PARTIES. I TOLD
HIM OF OUR HOPE THAT INTERNATIONAL OPINION COULD BE MOBILIZED BEHIND
THESE PRINCIPLES, AND THAT ISRAEL WOULD THEN RECONSIDER SAME OF HER
CURRENT POSITIONS. I AGREED WITH FAHMY THAT THE PROCEDURE OF WORKING
FROM DRAFT TREATIES WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY SPEED THE PROCESS OF MOVING
TOWARD AGREEMENT.
13. WE BRIEFLY DISCUSSED THE SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON. SADAT,
LIKE ASSAD, WAS NOT IMPRESSED BY THE SINCERITY OF ISRAEL'S MORAL
COMMITMENT TO THE CHRISTIANS THERE, BUT HE DID AGREE ON THE NEED FOR
AN END TO THE FIGHTING IN THE SOUTH.
14. I WILL BE REFLECTING WITH YOU IN DETAIL ON SUNDAY WHERE
WE STAND AS A RESULT OF THE TRIP. IN BRIEF, HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH
THE PARTIES MAY NOT BE MUCH CLOSER ON THE KEY SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES,
I THINK WE HAVE NOW LAUNCHED A PROCESS WHICH CAN EVOLVE INTO SERIOUS
NEGOTIATIONS.
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